NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND.

A MATTER OF FACT ROMANCE.

By CHARLES READE.

CHAPTER III.

And now passed over "The Grove" the heaviest hours it had ever known—hours as weary as they were bitter to George Fielding. As the moment of parting drew nearer, there came to him that tardy consolation which often comes to the honest man when it can but add to his pangs of regret.

Perhaps no man is good, manly, tender, generous, honest, and unlucky quite in vain; at last, when such a man is leaving all who have been unjust or cold to him, scales fall from their eyes, a sense of his value flashes like lightning across their half-empty skulls and tepid hearts, they feel and express some respect and regret, and make him sadder to leave them; so did the neighbors of "The Grove" to young Fielding. Some hands gave him now their first warm pressure, and one or two voices even faltered as they said, "God bless thee, lad!"

And now the carter's lad ran in with a message from a farmer at the top of the hill.

"Oh, Master George, Farmer Dodd says if you please he couldn't think to let you walk. You are to go in his gig to Newbury, if you'll walk up as far as his farm. Oh, Master George, I be sorry you be going;" and the boy, who had begun quite cheerfully, ended in a whimper.

"I thank you! Take my bag, boy, and I will follow in half an hour."

Sarah brought out the bag, and opened it, and weeping bitterly, put into it a bottle with her name on a bit of paper tied around the neck, to remind poor George he was not forgotten at "The Grove," and then she gave George the key and went sadly in, her apron to her eyes.

And now George fixed his eyes on his brother William and said to him, "William will you come with me, if you please?"

"Ay, George, sure."

They went through the farm-yard side by side; neither spoke, and George took a last look at the ricks, and he paused, and seemed minded to speak, but he did not, he only muttered, "Not here." Then George led the way out into the paddock, and so into the lane, and very soon they saw the village church; William wondered George did not speak. They passed under the yew-tree into the church-yard; William's heart fluttered. He knew now where they were going, but what was George going to say to him there? His heart beat faint-like. By-and-by the brothers came to their mother's grave.

The grave was between the two men—and silence—both looked down.

George whispered, "Good-bye, mother! She never thought we should be parted this way." Then he turned to William, and opened his mouth to say something more to him; doubtless that which he had come to say, but apparently it was too much for him. I think he feared his own resolution. He gasped, and with a heavy sigh led the way home. William walked with him, not knowing what to think, do, or say; at last he muttered, "I wouldn't go if my heart was here!"

"I shall go, Will," replied George, rather sternly, as it seemed.

When they came back to the house, they found several persons collected.

Meadows had returned to see George off, and old Merton was also there, and he was one of those whose hearts gave them a bit of a twinge.

"George," said he, "I'm vexed for speaking unkind to you to-day, of all days in the year, I did not think we were to part so soon, lad."

"No more about it, uncle," faltered George; "what does it matter now?"

Susan Merton came out of the house; she had caught her father's conciliatory words; she seemed composed, but pale; she threw her arms around her father's neck.

"Oh, father," said she, imploringly, "I thought it was a dream, but he is going, he is really going. Oh, don't let him go from us; speak him fair, father, his spirit is so high!"

"Susan," replied the old farmer, "mayhap the lad thinks me his enemy, but I'm not. My daughter shall not marry a bankrupt farmer; but you bring home a thousand pounds—just one thousand pounds—to show me you are not a fool, and you shall have my daughter, and she shall have my blessing."

Meadows exulted.

"Your hand on that, uncle," cried George, with ardor; "your hand on that before Heaven and all present."

The old farmer gave George his hand upon it.

"But, father," cried Susan, "your words are sending him away from me."

"Susan," said George, sorrowfully but firmly, "I am to go, but don't forget it is for your sake I leave you, my darling Susan, to be a better man for your sake. Uncle, since your last words there is no ill-will, but" (bluntly) "I can't speak my heart before you."

"I'll go, George, I'll go; shan't be said my sister's son hadn't leave to speak his mind to let be who at such a time."

Merton turned to leave them, but ere he had taken two steps a most unlooked-for interruption chained him to the spot. An old man, with a long beard and a glittering eye, was amongst them before they were aware of him; he fixed his eye upon Meadows, and spoke a single word, but that word fell like a sledge-hammer.

"No!" said Isaac Levi, in the midst.

"No!" repeated he to John Meadows.

Meadows understood perfectly what "no" meant—a veto upon all his plans, hopes, and wishes.

"Young man," said Isaac to George, "you shall not wander forth from the home o your fathers. These old eyes see deeper than yours" (and he sent an eye-stab at Meadows); "you are honest—all men say so—I will lend you the money for your rent, and one who loves you" (and he gave another eye-stab at Meadows) "will bless me."

"Oh, yes, I bless you," cried Susan, innocently.

The late exulting Meadows was benumbed at this.

"Surely Heaven sends you to me," cried Susan. "It is Mr. Levi, of Farnborough."

Here was a diversion; Meadows cursed the intruder, and his own evil star that had raised him up so malignant an enemy.

"All my web undone in a moment," thought he, and despair began to take possession of him.

Susan, on the other hand, was all joy and hope, William more or less despondent.

The old Jew glanced from one to another, read them all, and enjoyed his triumph.

But when his eye returned to George Fielding he met with something he had not reckoned upon,

The young man showed no joy, no emotion. He stood immovable, like a statue of a man, and when he opened his lips, it was like a statue speaking with its marble mouth.

"No, Susan. No, old man. I am honest, though I am poor—and proud, though you have seen me put to shame near my own homestead more than once to-day. To borrow without a chance of paying is next door to stealing, and I should never pay you. My eyes are opened in spite of my heart. I can't farm 'The Grove' with no grass, and wheat at forty shillings. I've tried all I know, and I can't do it. Will, there is dying to try, and he shall try, and may Heaven speed his plow better than it has poor George's."

"I am not thinking of the farm now, George," said William. "I'm thinking of when we were boys, and used to play marbles—together—upon the tombstones." And he faltered a little.

"Mr. Levi, it seems you have a kindness for me; show it to my brother when I'm away, if you will be so good."

"Hum!" said Isaac, doubtfully. "I care not to see your stout young heart give way as it will. Ah, me! I can pity the wanderer from home. I will speak a word with you, and then I will go home."

He drew George aside and made him a secret communication. Merton called Susan to him, and made her promise to be prudent; then he shook hands with George and went away.

Now Meadows, from the direction of Isaac's glance, and a certain half-surprised, half-contemptuous look that stole over George's face, suspected that his enemy, whose sagacity he could no longer doubt, was warning George against him.

This made him feel very uneasy where he was, and this respectable man dreaded some exposure of his secret. So he said hastily, "I'll go along with you, farmer;" and in a moment was by Merton's side, as that worthy stopped to open the gate that led out of George's premises. His feelings were anything but pleasant when George called to him:

"No, sir; stop. You are as good a witness as I could choose of what I have to say. Step this way, if you please, sir."

Meadows returned, clenched his teeth, and prepared for the worst, but inwardly he cursed his uneasy folly in staying here, instead of riding home the moment George had said "yes" to Australia.

George now looked upon the ground a moment, and there was something in his manner that arrested the attention of all.

Meadows turned hot and cold.

"I am going—to speak—to my brother, Mr. Meadows!" said he, syllable by syllable, to Meadows, in a way brimful of meaning.

"To me, George?" said William, a little uneasy.

"To you? Fall back a bit." (Some rustics were encroaching upon the circle). "Fall back, if you please, this is a family matter."

Isaac Levi, instead of going quite away, seated himself on a bench outside the palings.

It was now William's turn to flutter; he said, however, to himself. "It is about the farm; it must be about the farm."

George resumed, "I've often had it on my mind to speak to you, but I was ashamed, now that's the truth; but now I am going away from her, I must speak out, and I will—William!"

"Yes, George!"

"You've taken a fancy—to my Susan, William?"

At these words, which, though they had cost him so much to say, George spoke gravely and calmly like common words. William gave one startled look all around then buried his face directly in his hands in a paroxysm of shame.

Susan, who was looking at George, remonstrated loudly; "How can you be so silly, George? I am sure that is the last idea poor William——"

George drew her attention to William by a wave of the hand.

She held her tongue in a moment and turned very red, and lowered her eyes to the ground. It was a very painful situation—to none more than to Meadows, who was waiting his turn.

George continued: "Oh, it is not to reproach you, my poor lad. Who could be near her, and not warm to her! But she is my lass, Will, and no other man's. It is three years since she said the word. And, though it was my hard luck there should be some coolness between us this bitter day, she will think of me when the ocean rolls between us, if no villain undermines me——"

"Villain! George!" groaned William. "That is the word I never thought to hear from you."

"That's why I speak in time," said George.

"I do suppose I am safe against villainy here." And his eye swept lightly over both the men. "Any way, it shan't be a mistake or a mis-understanding; it shall be villainy if 'tis done. Speak, Susan Merton, and speak your real mind once for all."

"Oh, George," cried Susan, fluttering with love; "you shall not go in doubt of me. We are bethrothed this three years, and I never regretted my choice a single moment. I never saw, I never shall see, the man I could bear to look on beside you, my beautiful George. Take my ring and my promise, George." And she put her ring on his little finger, and kissed his hand. "Whilst you are true to me, nothing but death shall part us twain. There never was any coolness between us, dear; you only thought so. You don't know what fools women are; how they delight to tease the man they love, and so torment themselves ten times more. I always loved you, but never as I do to-day; so honest, so proud, so unfortunate; I love you, I honor you, I adore you, oh, my love! my love! my love!"

She saw but George—she thought but of George—and how to soften his sorrow and remove his doubts if he had any. And she poured out these words of love with her whole soul, with blushes, and tears, and all the fire of a chaste and passionate woman's heart; and she clung to her love, and her tender bosom heaved against his and she strained him with tears and sighs to her bosom, and he kissed her beautiful head, and his suffering heart drew warmth from this heavenly contact.

The late exulting Meadows turned as pale as ashes, and trembled from head to foot.

"Do you hear, William?" said George.

"I hear, George," replied William, in an iron whisper, with his sullen head sunk upon his breast.

George left Susan and came between her and William.

"Then Susan," said he, rather loud, "here is your brother." William winced.

"William, here is my life!" And he pointed to Susan. "Let no man rob me of it if one mother really bore us."

It went through William's heart like a burning arrow. And this was why George had taken him to their mother's grave. That flashed across him too.

The poor sulky fellow's head was seen to rise inch by inch till he held it as high as a king's.

"Never!" he cried, half shouting, half weeping, "never, s' help me God! She's my sister from this hour—no more, no less. And may the red blight fall on my arm and my heart if I or any man takes her from you—any man!" he cried, his temples flushing, and his eye glittering; "sooner than a hundred men should take her from you while I am here, I'd die at their feet a hundred times."

Well done, sullen and rugged, but honest man; the capital temptation of your life is wrestled with and thrown. That is always to every man a close, a deadly, a bitter struggle; and we must all wade through this deep water at one hour or another of our lives; it is as surely our fate as it is one day to die.

These words, that burst from William's better heart, knocked at his brother's you may be sure; he came to William, "I believe you," he said; "I trust you, I thank you." Then he held out his hand; but nature would have more than that; in a moment his arm was around his neck, where it had not been this many a year; he withdrew it quickly, half ashamed, and Anne Fielding's two sons grasped one another's hands, and, holding hands, turned away their heads and tried to hide their eyes.

Isaac Levi came to the brothers, and said to William. "Yes, I will now," and then he went slowly and thoughtfully away to his own house.

"And now," faltered George, "I feel strong enough to go, and I'll go."

He looked at all the familiar objects he was leaving, as if to bid them farewell.

In a hutch near the corner of the house was William's pointer Carlo. Carlo, observing by the general movement that there was something on foot, had the curiosity to come out to the end of the chain, and, as he stood there, giving every now and then a little uncertain wag of his tail, George took notice of him and came to him and patted his head.

"Good-bye, Carlo," faltered George; "poor Carlo, you and I shall never go after partridges again, Carlo; the dog shows more understanding than the Christian; good-bye, Carlo." Then he looked wistfully at William's dog, but he said nothing more.

"Good-bye, little village church, where I went to church, man and boy; good-bye, church-yard, where my mother lies; there will be no church-bells, Susan, where I am going; no Sunday bells to remind me of my soul and home."

Susan flung her arms around his neck. "Oh, George, my pride is all gone; don't go, don't think to go; have pity on us both and don't go." And she clung to him—her bonnet fallen off, her hair disheveled—and they sobbed and wept in one another's arms.

Meadows writhed with the jealous anguish this sad sight gave him, and at that moment he could have cursed the whole creation. He tried to fly, but he was rooted to the spot. He leaned, sick as death, against the palings.

George and Susan cried together, and then they wiped one another's eyes like simple country folks, with one pocket-handkerchief; and then they kissed one another in turn, and made each other's tears flow fast again; and again wiped one another's eyes with one handkerchief.

Meadows griped the palings convulsively; hell was in his heart.

"Poor souls, God help them!" said William to himself, in his purified heart.

George was the first to recover himself. "Shame upon me!" he cried; he drew Susan to his bosom and pressed a long, burning kiss upon her brow.

And now all felt the wrench was coming. George, with a wild, half-terrified look, signaled William to come to him.

"Help me, Will! You see I have no more manhood than a girl."

Susan instinctively trembled. George once more pressed his lips to her, as if they would grow there. William took her hand. She trembled more and more.

"Take my hand; take thy brother's hand, my poor lass," said he.

She trembled violently; and then George gave a cry that seemed to tear his heart, and darted from them in a moment.

Poor Susan uttered one despairing scream, and stretched out both hands for George. He did not see her, for he dared not look back.

"Bob, loose the dog," muttered William, hastily, in a broken voice.

The dog was loosed, and ran after George, who, he thought, was only going for a walk. Susan was sinking, pale and helpless, upon her brother's bosom.

"Pray, sister," said gentle William, "pray, sister, as I must."

A faint shiver was all the answer; her senses had almost left her.

When George was a little way up the hill, something ran suddenly against his legs; he started—it was Carlo. He turned and lifted up his hands to Heaven, and William could see that he was blessing him for this. Carlo was more than a dog to poor George at that cruel moment. Soon after that George and Carlo reached the crown of the hill. George's figure stood alone a moment between them and the sky. He was seen to take his hat off and raise his hands once more to Heaven, whilst he looked down upon all he loved and left; and then he turned his sorrowful face again toward that distant land, and they saw him no more!

CHAPTER IV.

The moment George Fielding was out of sight Mr. Meadows went to the public-house, flung himself on his powerful black mare, and rode homeward without a word. One strong passion after another swept across his troubled mind. He burned with love, he was sick with jealousy, cold with despondency, and, for the first time, smarted with remorse. George Fielding was gone, gone of his own accord; but, like the flying Parthian, he had shot his keenest arrow in the moment of defeat.

"What the better am I?" thus ran this man's thoughts. "I have opened my own eyes, and Susan seems farther from me than ever now; my heart is like a lump of lead here; I wish I had never been born. So much for scheming. I would have given a thousand pounds for this, and now I'd give double to be where I was before. I had honest hopes then; now where are they? How lucky it seemed all to go, too. Ah! that is it, 'May all your good luck turn to wormwood!' that was his word, his very word, and my good luck is wormwood; so much for lifting a hand against gray hair, Jew or Gentile. Why did the old heathen provoke me, then? I'd as soon die as live this day. That's right, start at a handful of straw; lie down in it one minute and tremble at the sight of it the next, ye idiot. Oh, Susan! Susan! Why do I think of her? why do I think of her? She loves that man with every fiber of her body. How she clung to him! how she grew to him! And I stood there and looked on it, and did not kill them both. Seen it! I see it now; it is burnt into my eyes and my heart forever. I am in hell! I am in hell! Hold up, you blundering fool; has the devil got into you, too? Perdition seize me! May he die and rot before the year's out, ten thousand miles from home! may his ship sink to the bottom of the— What right have I to curse the man, as well as drive him across the sea? Curse yourself, John Meadows. They are true lovers, and I have parted them, and looked on and seen their tears. Heaven pity them and forgive me. So he knew of his brother's love for her after all. Why didn't he speak to me, I wonder, as well as to Will Fielding? The old Jew warned him against me, I'll swear. Why? Why, because you are a respectable man, John Meadows, and he thought a hint was enough to a man of your character. 'I do suppose I am safe from villainy here,' says he. That lad spared me; he could have given me a red face before them all; now if there are angels that float in the air, and see what passes amongst us sinners, how must John Meadows have looked beside George Fielding that moment? This love will sink my soul! I can't breathe between these hedges, my temples are bursting! Oh you want to gallop, do you? Gallop then, and faster than ye ever did since ye were foaled—confound ye!" With this, he spurred his mare furiously up the bank, and went crushing through the dead hedge that surmounted it; he struck his hat at the same moment fiercely from his head (it was fast by a black ribbon to his button-hole); and as they lighted by a descent of some two feet on the edge of a grass-field he again drove his spurs into his great fiery mare, all vein and bone. Black Rachel snorted with amazement at the spur, and with warlike delight at finding grass beneath her feet and free air whistling around her ears, she gave one gigantic bound like a buck, with arching back and all four legs in the air at once (it would have unseated many a rider, but never moved the iron Meadows), and, with dilating nostril and ears laid back, she hurled herself across country like a stone from a sling.

Meadows' house was about four miles and a half distant as the crow flies, and he went home to-day as the crow flies, only faster. None would have known the staid, respectable Meadows in this figure that came flying over hedge, and ditch and brook, his hat dangling and leaping like mad behind him, his hand now and then clutching his breast, his heart tossed like a boat among the breakers, his lips white, his teeth clenched, and his eyes blazing! The mare took every thing in her stride, but at last they came somewhat suddenly on an enormous high, stiff fence; to clear it was impossible; by this time man and beast were equally reckless; they went straight into it and through it as a bullet goes through a pane of glass; and on again over brook and fence, plowed field and meadow, till Meadows found himself, he scarce knew how, at his own door. His old deaf servant came out from the stable-yard and gazed in astonishment at the mare, whose flank panted, whose tail quivered, whose back looked as if she had been in the river, while her belly was stained with half a dozen different kinds of soil, and her rider's face streamed with blood from a dozen scratches he had never felt.

Meadows flung himself from the saddle and ran up to his own room; he dashed his face and his burning hands into water; this seemed to do him a little good. He came down stairs; he lighted a pipe (we are the children of habit); he sat with his eyebrows painfully bent. People called on him, he fiercely refused to see them.

For the first time in his life he turned his back on business. He sat for hours by the fire-place; a fierce mental struggle wrenched him to and fro.

Evening came, still he sat collapsed by the fire-place. From his window, among other objects, two dwellings were visible; one, distant four miles, had a whitewashed cottage, tiled instead of thatched, adorned with creepers and roses, and very clean, but in other respects little superior to laborers' cottages.

The other, distant six long miles, was the Grassmere farm-house, where the Mertons lived; the windows seemed burnished gold this evening.

In the small cottage lived a plain old woman—a Methodist; she was Meadows' mother.

She did not admire worldly people, still less envied them.

He was too good a churchman and man of business to permit conventicles of psalm-singing at odd hours in his house. So she preferred living in her own, which moreover was her own—her very own.

The old woman never spoke of her son, and checked all complaints of him, and snubbed all experimental eulogies of him.

Meadows never spoke of his mother; paid her a small allowance with the regularity and affectionate grace of clock-work; never asked her if she didn't want more—would not have refused her if she had asked for double.

This evening whilst the sun was shining with all his evening glory on Susan Merton's house, Meadows went slowly to his window and pulled down the blind, and, drawing his breath hard, shut the loved prospect out.

He then laid his hand upon the table, and he said, "I swear, by the holy bread and wine I took last month, that I will not put myself in the way of this strong temptation. I swear I will go no more to Grassmere farm, never, so long as I love Susan." He added, faintly, "Unless they send for me; and they won't do that, and I won't go of my own accord, I swear it. I have sworn it, however, and I swear it again, unless they send for me!"

Then he sat by the fire with his head in his hands—a posture he never was seen in before; next he wrote a note, and sent it hastily with a horse and cart to that white-washed cottage.

Old Mrs. Meadows sat in her door-way reading a theological work called "Believer's Buttons." She took the note, looked at it. "Why, this is from John, I think; what can he have to say to me?" She put on her spectacles again, which she had taken off on the messenger first accosting her, and deliberately opened, smothed, and read the note. It ran thus:

"Mother, I am lonely; come over and stay awhile with me, if you please.

"Your dutiful son, John Meadows."

"Here, Hannah," cried the old woman to a neighbor's daughter that was nearly always with her.

Hannah, a comely girl of fourteen, came running in.

"Here's John wants me to go over to his house: get me the pen and ink, girl, out of the cupboard, and I'll write him a word or two, anyway. Is there any thing amiss?" said she, quickly, to the man.

"He came in with the black mare all in a lather just after dinner, and he hasn't spoken to a soul since, that's all I know, missus. I think something has put him out, and he isn't soon put out, you know he isn't."

Hannah left the room after placing the paper as she was bid.

"You will all be put out that trust to an arm of flesh, all of ye, master or man, Dick Messenger," said the disciple of John Wesley, somewhat grimly; "ay, and be put out of the kingdom of Heaven, too, if ye don't take heed."

"Is that the news I'm to take back to Farnborough, missus?" said Messenger, with quiet, rustic irony.

"No; I'll write to him."

The old woman wrote a few lines reminding Meadows that the pursuit of earthly objects could never bring any steady comfort, and telling him that she should be lost in his great house—that it would seem quite strange to her to go into the town after so many years' quiet—but that if he was minded to come out and see her, she would be glad to see him, and glad of the opportunity to give him her advice, if he was in a better frame for listening to it than last time she offered it to him, and that was two years come Martinmas.

Then the old woman paused, next she reflected, and afterward dried her unfinished letter. And as she began slowly to fold it up and put in her pocket, "Hannah," cried she, thoughtfully.

Hannah appeared in the door-way.

"I dare say—you may fetch—my cloak and bonnet. Why, if the wench hasn't got them on her arm. What, you made up your mind that I should go, then?"

"That I did," replied Hannah. "Your warm shawl is in the cart, Mrs. Meadows."

"Oh, you did, did you? Young folks are apt to be sure and certain. I was in two minds about it, so I don't see how the child could be sure," said she, dividing her remark between vacancy and the person addressed; a grammatical privilege of old age.

"Oh, but I was sure, for that matter," replied Hannah, firmly.

"And what made the little wench so sure, I wonder?" said the old woman, now in her black bonnet and scarlet cloak.

"Why, la!" says Hannah, "because it's your son, ma'am, and you're his mother, Dame Meadows!"

[Continued next week.]

HE SAT DOWN.

Detroit Free Press.

We were running through South Carolina, when a great big giant of a fellow with a terrible eye and a voice like a foghorn boarded the train at a small station. I think most of the passengers sized him up as a chap whom it would be dangerous to argue with, but the giant wasn't satisfied with that. He blustered at the conductor, growled at the brakeman, and looked around as if seeking some one to pick a fuss with. Everybody answered him civilly, and he had two or three seats to himself, but the man who wants a row can generally find some pretext. About the center of the car a pale-looking chap about twenty-five years old occupied a seat and was reading a newspaper. After a time the giant rubbed along to where the young man sat and growled out:

"Stranger, what may be the first cost of such a hat as yours?"

The young man looked up with a flash in his big blue eyes and then turned to his paper without replying.

"Hey! Did you hear me?" roared the other, as he leaned over the seat and lifted the hat off the young man's head.

Quicker than one could count six a shining revolver came from you couldn't tell where, lifted itself on a level with the big man's eye, and the white fingers clutching the butt never trembled a hair's breadth as a quiet voice uttered the words:

"Drop that hat."

The hat fell from the giant's grasp, and the quiet voice continued:

"Now you sit down, or I will kill you!"

The muzzle of the weapon was not six inches from the man's eye, and I saw him turn from red to white in ten seconds. He backed away at the command, sat down in a seat opposite, and never stood up or said another word during his ride of twenty miles. He had a "navy" under his coat, but something in that quiet voice and blue eye warned him that the move of a finger on his part would crash a bullet into his head.

Middle of December, and no snow yet.

THE BRECKENRIDGE NEWS.

A Free Press, a Free Ballot, and Free Speech, are the Birthright of Freemen.

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Written for The Breckenridge News.

FOR DIXIE C——.

By Maggie A. Coyne.

I stood beside two narrow graves,
Beneath the setting sun—
The last of three friends "leal and true"
I stood the only one.
I saw them fade, the young the fair,
I saw their sweet eyes close,
And fold their patient hands unto
A statue-like repose.

I came unto my girlhood's home,
Bright shone the morning sun,
But she whose steps were linked with mine
Her weary course had run.
I passed with faltering, subdued steps
From silent room to room,
Once lighted by her quiet smile,
Now shadowed by the tomb.

I looked upon the forest green,
Whose paths our steps once trod:
Mine tread them still in solitude,
While her's have passed to God.
I trace the trackless fields of air,
Through which her spirit fled,
But follow her *alone in prayer*—
She slumbers with the dead.

The breeze with music-murmur sweeps
Through many a clustering vine,
And winged with fragrance falls asleep
Where, low in death, recline
Two flowers from one parent stem,
Two "loved and lost" of yore,
And whispers low, 'mid falling tears,
"Not dead, but gone before."

I looked on all she loved below,
The home her presence blessed—
Pure centre of each joy or woe—
The babe whom she caressed—
I know they held her spirit's chords
In many a strong, deep fold—
That *still they hold*. Love dieth not,
Nor fades, nor e'er grows cold.

Blinded with tears, I turned away,
Just as a golden wand
Glanced thwart the day's declining face,
And brightened all the land;
And bending o'er those flower-strewn graves
A rainbow arched the skies—
Born of our blending smiles and tears—
Seen but by Faith's clear eyes.

Union Star, Ky., Dec. 3, 1882.

TESTING A KUKLUX.

Detroit Free Press.

While I was in Charleston talking with a gentleman from the interior of the state, regarding the state of the country after the close of the war, and when the conversation had drifted to the kuklux point, I asked:

"Colonel, did you ever receive a warning to leave?"

"Three of 'em," he calmly replied.

"Regular notices?"

"Regular notices, and meant for business."

"On account of politics?"

"Not altogether. While I am a democrat, in one instance I opposed the nomination of an unfit man for office. Not only that, but I beat him out of it, and substituted an honest man. That action produced results, but the main object was to get my land for a song and clean me out. The notice gave me three days in which to leave the state."

"And what did you do?"

"I mounted my horse, took my shotgun, and rode to the plantation of the man who wrote the warning."

"Did you know who it was?"

"I suspected, and I tested him. He saw me approaching and ran for his gun. That action proved him to be the right man. He came out with his shotgun, took a dead rest on a bar, and fired a handful of buckshot at me from a distance of fifty feet. Sixteen of them struck me in the chest, arm and shoulder, and I tumbled from the horse."

"What did he do then?"

"Acted foolish—very foolish; and I have always wondered at it. Instead of waiting to reload, he came running up to finish me with his knife, and that was the chance to keel him over. He didn't kick twice after I fired."

"And did that end it?"

"Practically, although he left two sons who have been shooting at me off and on for two or three years past. If they continue annoying me I'll have to take a half a day some time this fall and hunt 'em out."

"And his wife."

"Well, the widow has offered to marry any man who will kill me, but hasn't worked up any candidates yet. Have a smoke, or someting to drink?"

Peculiar Death of a Young Lady, Whom it is Said was Killed by Fright.

Shelbyville, Dec. 12.—A story of a very peculiar death comes to-day from Hendricks township, this county. Last October Mr. Hugh Brannon gave a social dance at his house, which was attended by all the young people of the neighborhood. Among the guests were Miss Lottie Stroup, daughter of Mr. Peter Stroup, a well-known citizen, and her cousin, John Brant. During the evening young Brant and a fellow named Thurston got into a fight, which resulted in Brant getting a terrible whipping. Some one informed Miss Stroup that her cousin was killed, and instinctively she ran to where he was lying in the yard, where the fight took place. Brant was not dead, and as Miss Stroup knelt at his side he turned over, showing his face covered with blood and bruises. The sight so horrified the lady that she fainted, and then had a spasm, from which she never returned to consciousness. Yesterday, after being in a semi-unconscious condition, she died, just forty days after she received her fright. Miss Stroup was a lady of good mental abilities, her mind being well balanced. Her friends all claim that she was scared to death.

A Mouse's Nest in a Horse's Hoof.

San Diego Sun.

A staid old family nag belonging to William Jorres was brought to the shop to be reshod. The hoofs had grown very long, leaving hollow grooves beneath their outer rims. On cutting away this shell to make a foundation for the shoe, a hole was noticed underneath, and the attention of Mr. Koster was called to it. He investigated and found six young, living mice, closely nestled within the hollow disk.

The Little Town of Ty Ty.

Atlanta Constitution.

Ty Ty is one of those little places with a queer name, which proposes to get a town charter and join in the march of human events. It rejoices in stores of turpentine, in addition to the other good things usually found in a thrifty Georgia village.

Lightning struck the barn of Wesley Sprague, near Baldwin's, L. I., cut the hay in the mow into two parts as evenly as though cut with a knife, and passed into his stables, killing his horse. It then followed the ground for forty feet, striking a hog pen and killing two hogs.